Circulation of old and unhygienic notes in NER

4657. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Reserve Bank of India is still allowing circulation of very old, dilapidated, unhygienic soiled notes of rupee one, two and five in the NER; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government to prevent this inaction of the RBI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) The Reserve Bank of India does not allow circulation of excessively soiled notes. Such notes are continuously phased out of circulation. Consequent upon coinisation of Re. 1, Rs. 2 and Rs. 5 denomination notes, the printing of these notes has been discontinued from November, 1994, February, 1995 and November 1995 respectively. There are still a.few pieces of notes in these denominations in circulation which have not been returned by the public for exchanging these notes for coins or banknotes of higher denomination despite wide publicity given in newspapers in English and vernacular languages and also through electronic media.

(b) Question does not arise.

Downsizing of Government as announced by Finance Minister

4658. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether two Secretary level posts in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry have been abolished;

(b) by when the downsizing exercise announced by the Finance Minister, during his Budget Speech, would be undertaken;

(c) whether the Committee as promised by him has been set up to look into the issues concerning downsizing of Government; and

(d) if so, what are its terms of reference and by when it will give its recommendations?